

The City of Houston Addressing & Street Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to serve as a helpful tool in better understanding the street naming and site addressing requirements used by the City of Houston.

The requirements of Chapter 41 of the City Code of Ordinances were developed with the input of the Greater Houston/Harris County Emergency Services Addressing Committee (ESAC). ESAC is composed of the City of Houston, Planning and Development Department, Development and Neighborhood Services Division, Houston Fire Department, Houston Police Department, Houston Emergency Center, Greater Harris County 911, Harris County Sheriff's Department, Harris County Engineer's Office, and Center Point Energy.

This committee utilized best practice guidelines for street naming and site addressing conventions.

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Frequently Asked Questions

The following are frequently asked questions regarding the addressing process at the City of Houston.

Q: What kind of addresses will the planning department create? How will it be different than what code enforcement already does?

A: The planning department will assign parcel base addresses only. If the building requires multiple addresses those will be issued at the code enforcement office at time of permitting.

Q: Who was doing addresses before the City?

A: Property addresses (street numbers) within the City of Houston have been assigned by Code Enforcement when customers need permits on infill projects and during the platting process on subdivision plats. Addresses are created by Center Point Energy for everything outside the full Purpose City Limits. The Planning and Development Department is responsible for street naming and street name changes.

Q: Wait..What? What's the difference between an infill address and a subdivision address?

A: **Development/Infill addresses** are small lot developments. These include but are not limited to Duplexs, a single house, garage apartment, the assignment of units. These will continue to be assigned as they are today by Code Enforcement.

Subdivision addresses are large multi parcel plats. Cinco Ranch or Waters Edge. These will be assigned by the addressing team in the Planning Department as part of the platting process.

Q: Who is responsible for addressing in the ETJ?

A: Center Point is responsible of all addressing in the ETJ.

Q: Who is responsible for addressing the Limited Purpose Districts?

A: Center Point is responsible of all addressing in the Limited Purpose Districts.

Q: Along the border of the City Limits and the ETJ will the Cities data match Center Points Data?

A: Yes, the City of Houston has worked closely with Center Point to make sure the standards for road and address creation are identical.

Q: What about fractional addresses? Who will assign those?

A: Fractional addresses will be done as they are done today. There will be no change in how these are assigned or created. Center Point and Code Enforcement share this responsibility today and will continue to do so.

Q: At what interval are addresses assigned?

A: One address number will be placed every 25 feet. This number will vary depending on lot size and location.

Q: What do you base your 25ft standard on?

A: The City of Houston follows standards initially set by Center Point. The interval addresses assigned are largely dictated by lot size. In older sections of the city, lots are approximately 25' wide, assigning addresses in increments of 2, approximately every 25' yields 50 addresses odd, 50 addresses even per 100-lot block. Now the lots tend to be 50-60 ft wide so they go by 4s or even 6s or 8s depending on lot size.

Q: What are the elements of a site address?

A: A site address is composed of the following elements: 1) a primary address number; 2) a street name; and 3) a street name suffix.

Q: Is there a grid which is used to assign block ranges? How are new road ranges created?

A: There is no grid system used in addressing at the City of Houston, the complexity of the addressing prevents it. The City does work in an outward motion when addressing. As you move away from central Houston the addresses will become larger. Generally starting addresses in new subdivisions or existing subdivisions are generated from existing or parallel addresses. Under normal situations addresses continue from existing ranges with 1 off of the lower range so that there is room to add an address. It is practice to always assign a buffer of 2 or 3 to the beginning and end of a block for future development. If it is a completely new area, you use the block grid pattern of parallel streets to determine what to use and to determine centerline directionality.

Q: When is an Address Official?

A: Addressing is not final until the plat reaches final recordation. Any addressing completed before recordation is subject to change and should not be used for establishing mailings or business materials such as signage or stationary. Addresses, unless specifically requested, will not be available until recordation.

Q: Why is the City of Houston assuming responsibility for addressing?

A: To streamline the addressing process and to increase efficiency for emergency responders. Addressing will occur in the platting process. This change will only affect subdivision plats and will not affect development/infill plats. Development/infill plats will be addressed at the code enforcement office when an applicant applies for permits.

Q: Why are we fixing something that already works?

A: The short answer is that we are fixing the process because it does not work well enough. The long answer is that the current addressing system is broken up by several different organizations and is based on a paper driven system. Due to the complexity of this configuration data falls through the gaps frequently. To close these gaps we are enhancing the process so that data is created and maintained at its origin. Not at its destination. By working top

down instead of bottom up we are able to keep everyone connected to the process up-to-date and current.

Q: Why are you charging for something that was free?

A: The new fees help fund and support the following new features and functionality.

- The ability to see on a map all ongoing platting
- The ability to reserve road names
- The ability to receive preliminary addresses with less error
- Supports the process of moving from a paper to a digital environment
- Supports keeping the data updated across city departments electronically
- Supports a more efficiently run Emergency Response and Permitting Department.
- Supports the ability of being able to download markups

Q: Why are you doing roads in the ETJ and the Full Purpose but only addressing in the Full Purpose?

A: Chapter 42-20(a) requires “any subdivision of property in the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction shall require a subdivision plat” there is no similar requirement for addressing. Thus, addressing at the lot level is not part of Chapter 42 ordinance/required of platting.

Q: Will the City of Houston ever expand addressing into the ETJ?

A: Not at this time.

Q: Where can I find a copy of the draft addressing ordinance?

A: http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/DevelopRegs/dev_regs_links.html or <https://edrc.houstontx.gov/edrc/Login.aspx>

If you have any other questions please contact
pdaddressing@houstontx.gov

Addressing Authorities

All properties within a **subdivision plat** located inside the full purpose city limits of the City of Houston will be assigned a site address and any proposed streets within the subdivision plat shall be named in accordance with Chapter 41 of the City Code of Ordinances. These site addresses and street names will be assigned by the Planning Department.

All properties within a **development plat** located inside the full purpose city limits of the City of Houston will be assigned a site address and any proposed streets within the development plat shall be named in accordance with Chapter 41 of the City Code of Ordinances. These site addresses and street names will be assigned by Code Enforcement at the time the applicant applies for permits.

Center Point will continue to address all subdivision and development plats in the ETJ and into their service area as they currently do. All fractional site address types will be assigned by Center Point and Code Enforcement. Fractional numbers for addresses shall be avoided unless absolutely necessary to fit prevailing patterns. These include but are not limited to:

Fraction	CenterPoint Address Feature	Permitting Address Feature
1/2	Traffic signals and billboard meters.	Irrigation meters, non-building site
1/4	Check meters.	N/A
1/3	Guard lights, other unmetered services.	N/A
1/5	Cable TV meters	Cable TV meters
2/3	Cell Tower	Cell Tower
3/4	NPD (Neighborhood Protection)	NPD (Neighborhood Protection)
1/6	Old Prime Co Cell Tower Sites	N/A

A list of current regional addressing authorities and their contacts can be found by contacting the Addressing Team at Pdaddressing@houstontx.gov.

ESAC Data update contacts

The following represents organizations which maintain emergency management data. These organizations should be notified of any changes made to addresses, roads, and or political boundaries. Individual contacts can be found by contacting the Addressing team at PDaddressing@houstontx.gov.

Organization:
USPS
CenterPoint
GHC 9-1-1
HCAD
Houston Emergency Center
Harris County Tax Office
Code Enforcement
HCPID
City of Houston

Street Renaming

Citizen Request:

Section 41-38 requires property owners seeking a street name change to submit a written petition to the director of the Planning and Development Department requesting city council to officially adopt a new street name for the subject street. A written petition for a street name change shall be signed by at least 50% of the property owners along a public street or at least 75% of the property owners along a non-public street. Street name changes are subject to approval by City Council.

Emergency Services Request:

Section 41 – 21(a) requires the director to administer a program for approving street names within the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction.

If a road name is determined to be a problem to local or interlocal 911 emergency dispatches then a road name change request may be submitted to the City of Houston Planning and Development Department, Addressing Group by email to:

PDaddressing@cityofhouston.net.

In both situations a Road Enhancement Request Form (Appendix I) will be created and filed on the road.

Changing an Existing Address Number

Changing Site Addresses:

Sec. 41-24

After the recordation of a subdivision plat, the director may change a site address if a property owner or the property owner's agent submits to the director a written request and payment of the applicable administrative fee for each site address to be changed.

Changing existing site addresses must follow current practices instituted at Code Enforcement. The citizen would need to demonstrate valid justification for requesting the change. The citizen will provide Code Enforcement with Light, Water, and Gas bills and pay a fee of \$100 dollars. Code Enforcement will use the bills provided to notify the companies that the accounts are being changed. The citizen would then need to take their paperwork to their respective County Appraisal District in person and have them change the address in the CAD tax database. The fees charged for this service are dictated by building code 117.1.14. Changes shall meet the parameters of section 41-23(A) of the addressing ordinance.

Emergency Services Request for address changes.

9-1-1 emergency management will submit to the director a written request indicating that the site address(es) which are misleading to emergency communicators or responders. After review by addressing department 9-1-1 emergency management will notify the affected community and property owners and work with the community towards a solution.

See Appendix II for the Address Change Letter.

Posting of Addresses 41-25

[Chapter 10 Article V - Numbering](#) The posting requirements for addresses.

Sec. 10-213 - Posting of residential unit numbers.

Each residential unit and each lodging unit shall have a residential unit number posted and maintained on or within 18 inches of the principal entrance to the unit or such greater distance as the fire marshal may approve.

Sec. 10-213.1 (b) outlines posting of directions for multi-unit residential properties:

- (b) If a building contains four or more residential or lodging units, residential unit numbers shall be posted and maintained at each end of said building indicating the units contained therein. If the residential unit numbers posted at one end of the building are clearly visible from a public street or private driveway, and the opposite end of the building is not visible from either a public street or a private driveway, residential unit numbers shall be required only on the end of the building that is **clearly visible from the public street or private driveway**. It shall not be necessary to post the identifying residential unit numbers of all units contained in the building at the ends of said building if the residential unit numbers posted at the ends indicate the units contained in the building. (Example: Where a building contains units numbered 1 to 20, it shall be adequate to post "1—20" on the end of the building.) The ends of the building shall be designated by the owner of the property. The residential unit numbers required by this subsection shall be at least four inches in height, shall be permanently affixed to the outside of the building, and shall be of a color which is in contrast to the background.

Section 10-215 (a) Each noncommercial building shall have an identifying number posted in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street, road, common driveway or common parking lot fronting the property.

Responsibility for Enforcement

The Department of Public Works and Engineering [Sign Administration and Permits](#) is responsible for the enforcement of signage in the City Limits.

[Houston Sign Code](#) Constitutes Chapter 46 of the City of Houston Building Code (based upon the 2003 International Building Code), It is separately published.

Section 4604(a) Sign Administrator

The Director of Public Works and Engineering shall appoint a Sign Administrator to administer and enforce the terms and conditions of this chapter and all other provisions of law relating to signs. The Sign Administrator is empowered to delegate the duties and powers granted to and imposed upon him by this chapter to other persons serving under the Sign Administrator. The Sign Administrator and such other persons shall constitute the Sign Administration Section of the Department of Public Works and Engineering. The Sign Administrator is directed to enforce and carry out all provisions of this chapter.

Infill Addresses

Infill addressing or development plats are handled by Public Works Code Enforcement at 1002 Washington Ave. Infill addresses are defined as addresses which do not fall under the direct purview of the Planning Department. They make up the small plats such as the creation of garage apartments and duplexes.

Infill addresses given by Code Enforcement are required to be on roads which are recorded on a plat. This is a quality control measure used to ensure all addressing and road naming standards are being implemented correctly.

In order to receive preliminary addressing not associated with a Subdivision or Development Plat you must present a legal description to Code Enforcement of the area. Addresses will not be assigned based on metes and bounds.

Addressing Policy & Procedure

[Sec. 42-21](#) Exceptions to subdivision platting requirements

A subdivision plat shall not be required for a subdivision of a reserve tract that is part of a subdivision plat approved by the commission or pursuant to this article if the reserve tract is not encumbered by a one-foot reserve and will not be used for single family residential purposes.

This means if you are developing on an existing recorded reserve and it is residential you will receive your addressing at recordation, after you talk to a planner and submit your plat to the [PlatTracker](#) via the standard planning process.

If you are developing anything other than residential you will receive addressing at the time you apply for your first permit at Code Enforcement.

If it is not residential and you are building on an existing recorded reserve and as long as the use of the land does not change you do not need to submit anything to the PlatTracker or the planning department. You are however required by Code Enforcement to provide a written description of the land in order to receive an address. This could be a deed description or metes and bounds description.

Street Type Limitations

Chapter 41 prohibits the use of more than one street suffix within a street name.

e.g. Burner Boulevard Street

Both “Boulevard” and “Street” are acceptable street suffixes per Section 41-22 (a)(4)(g) of the City Code of Ordinances. But only one can be used in each street name. The use of a double street suffix causes errors with in the 911 routing system where the word “Boulevard” will be abandoned and “Street” will be assigned in its place. This would result in a misrouted 911 call (to Burner Street). A complete list of planning approved USPS street name suffixes can be found at Section 41-22 (4) of the City Code of Ordinances and in Appendix IV of this document.

Street Name Limitations

The primary Street Name, as defined 41-2, may be either numeric or spelled out, but not both.

Example 1st St. – Pass

Example First 1st St. – Fail

The primary Street Name, as defined 41-2, shall not contain any titular abbreviations such as;

Doctor - Dr

Mister - Mr

General - Gen

Saint – St

The primary Street Name, as defined 41-2, shall not exceed four words.

Example Babbling Deep Blue Broad Brook Blvd - Fail

City of Houston Building Code

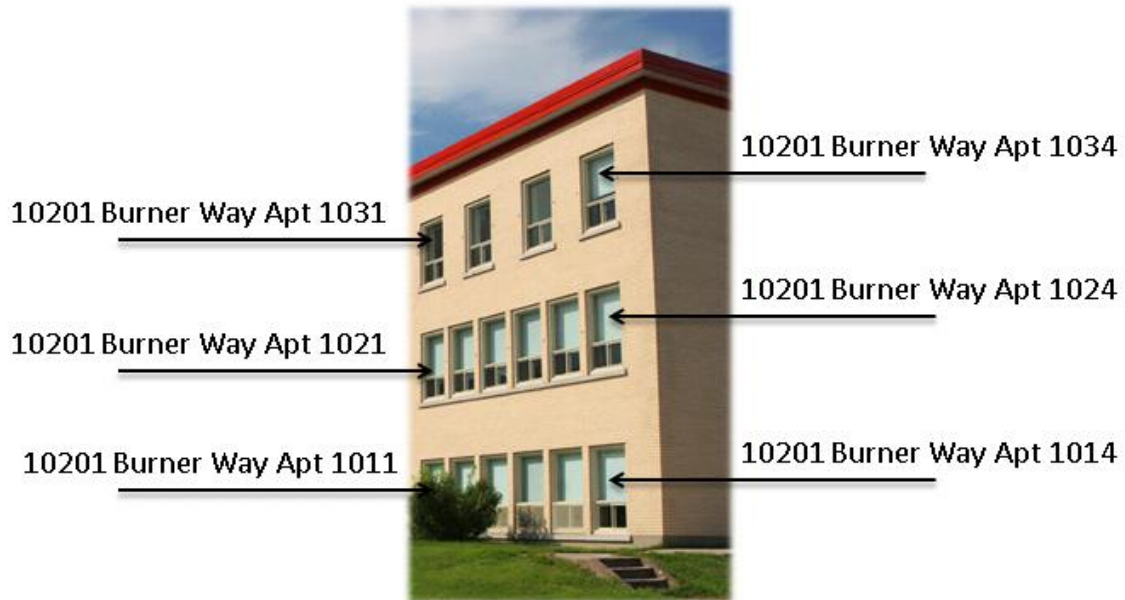
http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/divisions/planning/enforcement/06_ibc_amendments.pdf

Best Practice Addressing Scenarios

The following self-explanatory images illustrate preferred addressing practices.

Multi Story Structures

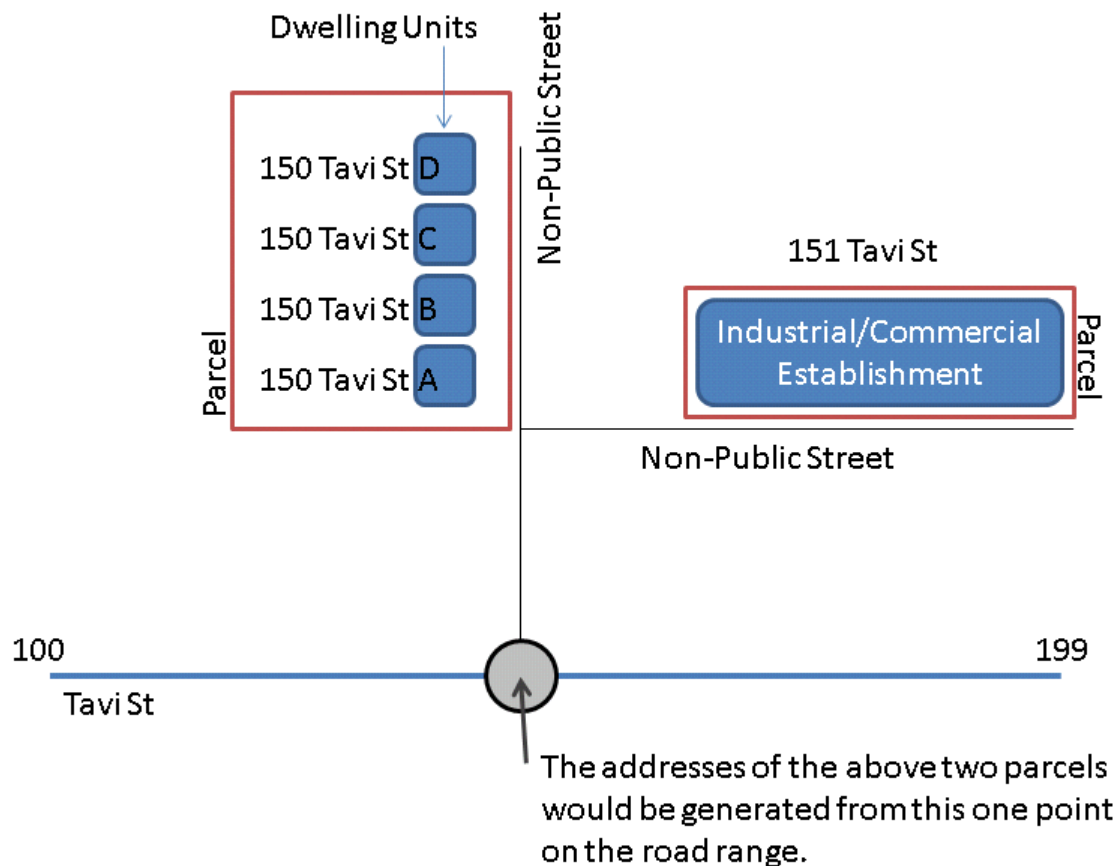
Sample Addresses: Apartment Complex



Sample Addresses: Office Building



Below is an example of how addresses will be generated off non-public streets.



Office Buildings, Apartment Buildings, and Condominiums

Shall be numbered in accordance with Sec. 41-23, with the main building receiving one address at recordation. Per Sec. 41-23(5) At time of permitting each individual office being assigned suite numbers as secondary location indicators. The suite/unit numbers assigned should indicate the floor location (e.g. Suite 204 is the fourth office on the second floor). Alpha numerical numbers are not to be used. **Individual suite number assignments will be determined by developer and submitted to Code enforcement when receiving permits.**

Directional prefix & suffix

Directional prefix & suffix designations may be used to clarify the general location of a street. 41-22(a)(3). It is policy that directional's are not to be used in conjunction with a street name.

A street name suffix shall not be used as part of the street name 41-22(a)(4)(g).

Strip Commercial Buildings

Shall be numbered in accordance with Sec. 41-23 with the main building receiving one addresses at recordation. **At time of permitting each individual unit being assigned suite numbers as secondary location indicators.** Alpha numerical numbers are not to be used. Individual suite number assignments will be determined by developer and submitted to Code enforcement when receiving permits.

Townhomes

Townhomes that are individually owned and not part of an apartment complex's shall be assigned an individual address for each unit as determined by sec 41-23. Townhomes that are under the apartment category will be addressed as apartments, with the main building receiving one address and each individual townhouse being assigned apartment numbers as secondary locators.

Mobile Home Parks/Manufactured Home Communities

Each individual mobile home or manufacture home shall be assigned its own individual addresses following the basic rules for distance and direction. This generally results in leaving 4 to 8 numbers between adjacent sites.

Corner Lots

Shall be numbered in accordance with Sec. 41-23 (a)(1), lots are to be addressed from the street to which the property is adjacent to or has direct vehicular access. Addresses based on the driveway shall require the mailbox to be placed at the driveway access. Addresses based on the front of the structure shall require the mailbox to be placed on the road at the front of that structure. Display of addresses numbers on the structure shall face the road to which the home is addressed. The assigned address will be determined by the site plan presented at the time a building permit is requested or a plat is submitted via the Plat Tracker.

Vanity Addresses

Vanity addresses (i.e., addresses that are not regular, sequential house numbers) cause confusion and delay in of emergency services, including police, fire, and ambulance services. Therefore they will not be allowed.

Appendix I

The following is the COH Road Enhancement Request Form which is used in determining whether a road name should be changed or not.

Is the area in question less than 50% Commercial?

Is the area in question more than 50% Commercial?
(No immediate action taken)

Does the adjacent area have 100 or less Residential structures?

Does the adjacent area have 100 or more Residential structures?
(No immediate action taken)

If any or all criteria exceed their stated threshold then No Action is to be taken.

Attached Documentation

- ☐ Affected areas attached. PDF or JPEG
- ☐ Subdivision Plat Attached.
- ☐ HCAD Map print and ownership table print.
- ☐ Other Recorded Documentation.

Requesting Entity:

Customer
In House

Editor:

Time/date:

Keymap/Lambert:

Intersecting Major Street:

Description of Problem.

Suggested Solution

If any or all criteria exceed their stated threshold then No Action is to be taken.
Action Recommended

Action Not Recommended

Appendix II

The following is the COH Address Change Form. It is used when changing addresses submitted by someone other than the owner of the address in question.

The Planning and Development Department with the City of Houston has found your current address of _____ to be in conflict with:

___ Existing Street Patterns

___ Recorded Legal Plats

___ Existing Address Patterns

It has been determined that problems could arise when trying to locate addresses on this street due to other above mentioned conflicts. I am sure that you have had some experiences with misrouted mail or packages, slowly delivered services and friends or others asking for more specific instructions of how to find the property. This problem may also arise when emergency services such as fire, police, and EMS needs to find the location. In the interest of eliminating confusion the street/road will be renamed.

As the addressing authority the Planning and Development Department is requesting you change your address to correct these issues. To receive your new address please contact the Planning and Development Department at 713-837-7700 or stop by in person at 611 Walker 6th Floor during business hours between 8:00a.m. and 5:00p.m.. There is no charge for this service.

In order to complete this change it is required that you bring with you your 16 digit HCAD account number, and your last Light, Water, and Gas bills. This information will be used to contact your utilities and notify them of the change.

A request of this change has been submitted to _____ your City Council Representative.

By completing this process you will be improving the accuracy of emergency response and improving the safety of you and your family.

Appendix III

City approved street types

Avenue	AVE
Boulevard	BLVD
Bridge	BRG
Bypass	BYP
Circle	CIR
Court	CT
Crossing	XING
Crossroad	XRD
Drive	DR
Expressway	EXPY
Fork	FRK
Freeway	FWY
Highway	HWY
Lane	LN
Loop	LOOP
Motorway	MTWY
Oval	OVAL
Parkway	PKY
Passage	PSGE
Path	PATH
Place	PL
Road	RD
Street	ST
Throughway	TRWY
Trail	TRL
Tunnel	TUNL
Way	Way